

TREASURE CHEST





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THE LEGEND OF THE POINSETTIA

BY MARGARET FOLEY

ROSITA WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A POOR MEXICAN FARMER.



WHILE HER FATHER WAS IN THE FIELDS, ROSITA HELPED HER MOTHER AT HOME.



SHE DID NOT MIND BEING POOR



... EXCEPT ON CHRISTMAS EVE, WHEN EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE BROUGHT PRESENTS TO THE CHRIST CHILD IN THE CRIB.



THEN SHE WAS SAD.



SO ROSITA WENT TO THE CHAPEL ...



OUTSIDE THE CHAPEL DOOR ...



AND SUDDENLY ...

NOW THIS PLANT, WHICH WE KNOW AS THE
POINSETTIA, OR THE FLOWER OF THE NATIVITY,
IS OUR CHRISTMAS FLOWER.

CHUCK WHITE

PART 15

ON HIS WAY HOME FROM THE ANNUAL FOOTBALL BANQUET WHERE HE HAD DECLINED TO ACCEPT HIS LETTER, CHUCK MET BILL RANKIN AGAIN, AND WENT OFF WITH HIM.



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CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON.

WE'LL BE ALL SET AS SOON AS FATHER CARROLL ARRIVES.

THESE YOUNGSTERS CAN HARDLY WAIT.



HERE'S FATHER CARROLL / MERRY CHRISTMAS, FATHER!



MERRY CHRISTMAS, CHILDREN!



NEXT / CONNIE SPENCE MERRY CHRISTMAS, CONNIE!



THAT WAS A GREAT PARTY, JOE.

IT SURELY WAS. COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE NOW, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON THERE, TOO.



MERRY CHRISTMAS, DAD!

MERRY CHRISTMAS, SON. I...HOPE YOU HAVE MANY MORE OF THEM.



HOW ABOUT SOME TURKEY, CHUCK?

THANKS, MRS. KELLY. I COULDN'T EAT ANOTHER BITE!

PS-SST! CHUCK.





FATHER KIERNAN

TELLS ABOUT

Christmas Customs in Other Lands

By George F. Foley



IN ITALY, WHERE ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI INTRODUCED IT, THE CRIB IS STILL AN IMPORTANT PART OF CHRISTMAS. THERE IS ONE IN EVERY HOME.



THE WHOLE FAMILY RECITES NOVENA PRAYERS IN PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS.



POLAND HAS THE BREAKING OF BREAD ON CHRISTMAS EVE. THE BREAD, CALLED "OPLATKI," IS DISTRIBUTED BY THE CHURCH.



JUST BEFORE DINNER THE WAFER IS PASSED UNTIL ALL HAVE SHARED IT.



IN IRELAND, A CANDLE BURNS BRIGHTLY IN EVERY WINDOW TO GUIDE THE HOLY FAMILY, AND THE DOORS ARE LEFT UNLATCHED, SHOULD THEY SEEK SHELTER.

THEY MAY SEE THE LIGHT AND KNOW THAT THEY ARE WELCOME HERE.



IN EVERY HAMLET THE ENGLISH SING CHRISTMAS CAROLS ON CHRISTMAS EVE.



MOST GERMAN FAMILIES HAVE A TABLE SET ON CHRISTMAS EVE FOR THE HOLY FAMILY, SHOULD THEY KNOCK AT THE DOOR.



CHILDREN IN FINLAND PLACE STRAW ON THE FLOORS OF THEIR HOMES AND SLEEP THERE ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

IT IS HARD HERE ON THE STRAW.

OUR LORD SLEPT ON STRAW ON THE FIRST CHRISTMAS NIGHT. IT IS THE LEAST WE CAN DO FOR HIM.



IN LITHUANIA, EVEN THE LOAVES OF BREAD ARE STAMPED WITH THE IMAGE OF THE BOY CHRIST.

SEE THE HOLY CHILD!



HUNGARIAN CHILDREN CARRY A SMALL CRIB THROUGH THE STREETS ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

MAKE WAY FOR THE CHRIST CHILD!



MEXICAN VILLAGERS RE-ENACT JOSEPH AND MARY SEEKING SHELTER. THIS THEY CALL "POSADA," MEANING "INN."

TONIGHT WE SHALL HAVE A POSADA BEFORE THE HOME OF RANCHO VARELA.

YES, LAST NIGHT WE WENT TO JORGE'S.



AT FIRST, THE "INNKEEPER" REFUSES, BUT LATER HE ADMITS THEM. INSIDE, THEY KNEEL IN PRAYER. THIS CEREMONY, REPEATED EVERY NIGHT, BEGINS NINE NIGHTS BEFORE CHRISTMAS.



IN PERU, MOST PEOPLE PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS ON CHRISTMAS EVE, LEADING ANIMALS LOADED WITH FOOD FOR THE HOLY FAMILY. AT MIDNIGHT ALL GO TO MASS.



OUR BLESSED MOTHER MUST NOT WAIT FOR FOOD ON THIS NIGHT.

HAWAIIAN CHILDREN, WHO NEVER SEE SNOW, PAINT PALM TREES WHITE.



THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM BELONGS ON TOP.

CHINESE MISSION CHILDREN DECORATE "THE TREE OF LIGHT" WITH COLORED PAPER RINGS. THEN THEY SING CAROLS.



SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT.

CUSTOMS IN OTHER COUNTRIES ARE STRANGE AREN'T THEY, FATHER?

THEY REALLY AREN'T STRANGE AT ALL. EACH HOLDS THE SAME MEANING - TO HONOR

THE COMING CHRIST. FOR THE HOLY CHILD IS BORN TO ALL PEOPLES. AND THAT, AFTER ALL, IS THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS.



PERKY and BOOBY

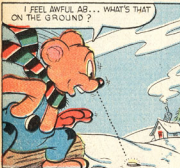
HERE IT IS, CHRISTMAS DAY,
AND I DON'T HAVE A PRESENT
FOR PERKY.



AND I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY TO
BUY HIM ONE, EITHER.



I FEEL AWFUL AB... WHAT'S THAT
ON THE GROUND?



OH... IT'S JUST A DIRTY,
OLD PENNY.



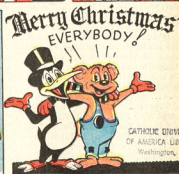
BUT WAIT! PERKY COLLECTS OLD
COINS. THIS PENNY ISN'T MUCH,
BUT I'LL GIVE IT TO HIM FOR
HIS COLLECTION.



MERRY CHRISTMAS,
BOOBY!

MERRY CHRISTMAS,
PERKY! I HAVE A LITTLE
GIFT FOR YO...
JIMINY! LOOK AT
THE GIFTS!





BILLY FINDS CHRISTMAS

BY
ANN
WING



MARGARET and Peter Campbell sat on the front steps in the warm afternoon sun of a southern December. They gazed across the blue-green waters of Shellfish Bay. Palm fronds on the front lawn rattled in the breeze, making a kind of gentle accompaniment for the thinking of brother and sister.

Margaret rebalanced the pad of paper on her knee and idly moistened her pencil point with her small, pink tongue. She sighed. "Little Billy . . . we'll have to get him something absolutely super, but super, but what?"

"Can't you see I'm trying to think?" asked her brother. "And quit using *super* all the time. You're in a rut," he added, a bit impatiently.

His sister, ignoring this comment, checked for the hundredth time the items on their Christmas list. This year Margaret and Peter had decided to pool their resources. The total, \$19.75, represented a year's careful saving. All but little Billy's gift had been purchased.

"Mom . . . epergne . . . \$2.79. Dad . . . slippers . . . \$2.83. James . . . \$2.00 in money toward his new bike. Mary Ellen . . . rag doll . . . \$1.95." Then followed Grandmother, Grandfather, Aunt Agatha and Uncle Dan. And at the very bottom of the list, with a big question mark, was Little Billy, the youngest Campbell.

"Let's see that list again," Peter said. Margaret handed it to him.

"We have only \$3.00 left," she reminded him.

"What's this *epergne*?" asked Peter, putting his grimy finger on the word. "And are you sure Mom's going to like whatever it is?"

"I showed it to you, silly. It's a table centerpiece for fruit and flowers, and Mom'll love it. Beautiful crystal and . . ."

"Okay, okay," agreed her brother hastily and slid his finger down the rest of the list. "Well, it looks all right—if we could just get an angle on his little nibs. Did you try out *Tall Tales of Mother Goose* on him?"

"He said it was babyish."

"How about a new paint set?"

"He doesn't like to paint anymore."

"How about games—darts, ring-toss, marbles . . . ?"

But Margaret only shook her head vigorously. "Out," she said flatly. "When I took Billy down to Fairfield's last Saturday, he just went past the counters and didn't seem interested in anything. I think he's ill."

"He must be," agreed Peter. "Did you tell Mom?"

"I did—and Mom said to let him alone. Billy isn't used to living where flowers bloom in the backyard in December. He's made up his mind he'll have snow and icicles and pine trees, or he just won't have Christmas. The poor little fellow is all confused."

"Mom's right, Sis. Yesterday morning when I told him that Christmas would be here this very week, he glared at me. 'Lot you know,' he said. 'Mom hasn't even unpacked my snowsuit. It can't be Christmas until there's snow.'"

The screen door behind the two opened and out came 11-year-old James. Little Billy was tagging him.

"I want to go, too," little brother pleaded. "Take me with you, Jamie."

James pried Billy's fingers off his arm and turned to Margaret and Peter. "I wish you'd explain to him that I've business to attend to and I can't drag him all over town with me."

"He could ride in the basket in front," began Margaret.

"No, he couldn't," objected Jamie. "You know what Dad said last time. That old bike of mine has all it can do to hold me and my papers." Billy's lip began to tremble.

"Aw, now, Billy, don't be a baby. Christmas is practically here, and the way things look your old brother James is going to have a new bicycle that'll knock your eye out. And who do you suppose will get the first ride on it?" James squatted on his heels and winked up at Billy, trying to make him smile.

Billy looked solemn, then anger reddened his round face. "It's no such thing," he blurted, "and you know it." With that, he marched down the steps and up the driveway.

"Now what did he mean by that?" James stood as he asked the question. Before either Peter or Margaret could answer, James jumped off the porch. "Boy, if I'm late!" he exclaimed as he picked up a dilapidated bicycle from the grass. He mounted it and went bouncing down Water Street to the office of the *Journal* to pick up his papers.

"I'd better help Mom with supper," Margaret announced, as she got up. "Maybe we'll think of a gift for Billy before tomorrow," she added vaguely. Then, putting her pad and pencil in a pocket of her skirt, she went inside.

Peter strolled to the backyard to take a look at his pool of tropical fish. While he was feeding them, little brother wandered out of the garage and stood watching him. "Want to feed Mickey and Sally?" asked Peter. Billy shook his head.

"What are you so glum about?" continued Peter.

"I'm not glum."

"Oh, yes, you are," said Peter. "You've a face as long as a mule's. You ought to be happy, because Christmas..."

Fury seemed to take hold of Billy. "That's a great big lie!" he screamed. "It's never going to be Christmas down here. Never! Never! Billy began to cry brokenly. He flung an arm across his face to hide the tears, then ran blindly. In a moment, he had disappeared around the corner of the house.

Peter had started after him when he heard his mother call to ask him to bring the ladder from the garage. And Peter forgot Billy.

It was not until the family had gathered

about the table that they noticed little brother's empty place.

"Where's Billy?" Dad asked.

Nobody knew. Peter remembered the last he had seen of him—little brother running around the corner of the house toward the street, crying.

"What was he crying about?" demanded Dad.

"I don't know exactly," said Peter. "I said he ought to be happy because Christmas was almost here and he flew into a tantrum. He said there wasn't ever going to be Christmas any more. Good grief! I didn't do anything to him."

"Billy is upset," said Mother. "I think he misses the snow."

"Poor little fellow!" sympathized Dad.

"Peter, please go out to the garage and get him. He's probably cried his eyes out and fallen asleep in that old deck chair," said Mom.

But Billy had not gone to sleep in the garage. In fact, he was nowhere to be found. The neighbors had not seen him at all. And by now it was nearly dark and the street lights were on, sparkling like a string of diamonds along the shore of Shellfish Bay.

The Campbells scattered in a frantic search. Jamie pedaled swiftly toward High Street, while Margaret and Peter raced down Water Street toward the center of town. Dad and Mom, fearful, searched up and down the shore, stopping to scan the waters of the Bay.

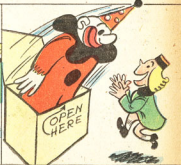
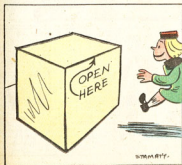
"Oh, dear God, don't let him be hurt," Margaret kept praying as she ran.

"I'll look on the pier," Peter told her as he turned on to a long wharf that ran out into the Bay. Lined with popcorn stands, clam bars and carnival booths, the dock was a gay place and had always delighted little brother.

Margaret, her heart pounding, continued down Water Street to the next corner, then pushed, panting, up the bluff to Main Street with its department stores, restaurants, and movie theaters. She asked everyone she met if he had seen a little boy in a blue suit, a little boy with brown hair and brown eyes and a button nose. But no one had seen a little boy who seemed to be lost. No one at all.

Margaret scrutinized the people who were going to the movies, but among them there was no one so small as Billy.

WILLIE BROWN THE CLOWN



A Christmas Carol

BASED ON THE TALE BY CHARLES DICKENS

Scrooge & Marley

OLD MARLEY WAS DEAD, DEAD AS A DOORNAIL, BUT TIGHT-FISTED EBENEZER SCROOGE NEVER PAINTED OUT HIS NAME.

LATE AFTERNOON, CHRISTMAS EVE.



SCROOGE WAS A SQUEEZING, GRASPING, COVETOUS OLD SINNER... THE DOOR OPENED.



BAH! HUMBAG!



CHRISTMAS A HUMBAG? SURELY, UNCLE, YOU DON'T MEAN THAT!



I DO. WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU TO BE MERRY? YOU'RE POOR ENOUGH.



COME THEN, WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE TO BE DISMAL? YOU'RE RICH ENOUGH!

HUMBAG!





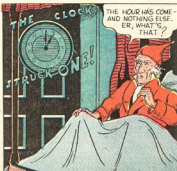
IN HIS ROOM HE PUT ON HIS DRESSING GOWN AND NIGHTCAP, WHEN SOON HE HEARD STRANGE NOISES.



YOU WILL BE HAUNTED BY THREE SPIRITS. ONE TOMORROW AT ONE, ANOTHER THE NEXT NIGHT, AND THE THIRD THE NEXT, FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, PAY ATTENTION TO THEM.



AFTER HAVING DELIVERED HIS WARNING, THE GHOST OF MARLEY BACKED SLOWLY TO THE WINDOW, THEN FADED INTO THE WINTRY NIGHT.





COME! MY TIME GROWS SHORT.
WHAT IS THE MATTER?

NOTHING— ONLY
I SHOULD LIKE TO
BE ABLE TO SAY A
WORD OR TWO TO MY
CLERK JUST NOW.



THE LIGHT SURROUNDING THE SPIRIT FADED OUT
AND SCROOGE WAS CONSCIOUS OF BEING IN HIS
OWN BED. HE SOON SANK INTO A HEAVY SLEEP...



AT THE STROKE OF ONE SCROOGE WAS AWAKENED
BY A BRILLIANT BLAZE OF LIGHT WHICH SEEMED
TO SPEAK ---



COME IN, I'M THE
GHOST OF CHRIST-
MAS PRESENT.



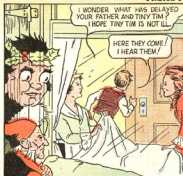
IT WAS HIS OWN ROOM. NO DOUBT ABOUT
THAT. BUT IT HAD UNDERGONE A
SURPRISING CHANGE.

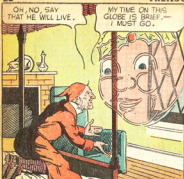
TAKE ME WHERE YOU WILL.
TEACH ME AND LET ME
PROFIT BY IT.

TOUCH MY
ROBE.



OUT OVER THE
CITY OF LONDON
THE SPIRIT OF
CHRISTMAS'S
PRESENT WHISKED
SCROOGE WHO
NOW WAS ANXIOUS
TO LEARN WHAT
THE SPIRIT MIGHT
TEACH. THEY
STOPPED OUTSIDE
BOB CRATCHIT'S
HUMBLE DWELLING.





THIS MAN MIGHT BE MYSELF. IS THERE NO ONE TO MOURN HIM? WHAT NEXT, O SPIRIT?



THE SPIRIT DID NOT REPLY, BUT LED THE WILLING SCROOGE AWAY..

OH, I'M WEARY! I'VE BEEN TO THE CHURCHYARD WHERE TINY TIM IS BURIED.



I AM SURE NONE OF US SHALL FORGET TINY TIM, SHALL WE?

NEVER, FATHER.



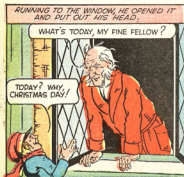
THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME NEXT CONVEYED SCROOGE TO A FAMILIAR DOOR.

MY HOUSE IS YONDER. WHY DO YOU POINT AWAY?



NO, OH, NO! I AM THAT MAN WHO LAY DEAD!





BOY, GO DOWN TO THE POULTRY SHOP AND TELL THEM TO BRING THEIR LARGEST TURKEY. COME BACK WITH THE MAN AND I'LL GIVE YOU A SHILLING — HALF A CROWN.

RIGHTO, GUV'NOR.

I'LL SEND IT TO BOB CRATCHIT'S. HE SHA'N'T EVER KNOW WHO SENT IT. WHAT A JOKE! IT'S TWICE THE SIZE OF TINY TIM!



SCROOGE DRESSED HIMSELF AND AT LAST GOT OUT INTO THE STREETS. HE REGARDED ALL WITH A DELIGHTED SMILE AND LOOKED SO PLEASANT MANY SAID, 'GOOD MORNING, SIR, A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU' BEFORE VISITING HIS NEPHEW. HE WENT TO CHURCH.



THE MORNING AFTER CHRISTMAS, IN SCROOGE'S OFFICE.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS, BOB, MY FRIEND! I AM GOING TO RAISE YOUR SALARY, AND WHAT IS MORE, THIS VERY AFTERNOON WE WILL DISCUSS THE AFFAIRS OF YOUR STRUGGLING FAMILY.




SCROOGE WAS BETTER THAN HIS WORD. TO TINY TIM, WHO DID NOT DIE, HE BECAME A SECOND FATHER. AND IT WAS SAID OF HIM THAT HE KNEW HOW TO KEEP CHRISTMAS WELL. MAY THAT BE TRULY SAID OF US ALL. AND, SO, AS TINY TIM OBSERVED — GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE!



The Editors and Publishers of
TREASURE CHEST
wish you a
JOYOUS CHRISTMAS
and a
HAPPY NEW YEAR